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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

SEPTEMBER 12, 1980

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Construing the Constitution

By J. R. Pole

JOHN HART ELY:
Democracy and Distrust
A Theory of Judicial Review
268pp. Harvard University Press. £9.
0 674 19636 8

Alfred the Great said that he had not set down many of his own laws in writing because he could not know what would please those who came after him. Thomas Jefferson of Virginia had a similar inspiration when he expressed the opinion that no generation should bind its successors, setting the lifetime of a generation at nineteen years. 'If these admirable precepts had been put into modern practice they would have averted a great deal of legal and constitutional controversy. But they could hardly have avoided confusion, as Jefferson tacitly recognized during his two terms as President of the United States, when he did nothing to implement his own ideas. The Supreme Court has adopted judicial review as the most practical method of rendering the American Constitution acceptable to successive generations; and judicial review has thus adapted a Constitution set down in writing to the needs of those who came after. On these grounds Alfred's moral insight may be said to have served the cause of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.'

When the Americans adopted the Constitution in place of the Articles of Confederation, they established a new government on a new principle. Here for the first time was a federal republic, based on representative principles, under the aegis not only of unified legislative and executive departments but under a federal judiciary. The Constitution was 'the supreme law of the land', from which it appeared to follow that if either the Congress or the states passed any law incompatible with it, the federal courts would have the duty of adjudging that law unconstitutional and therefore void. It has always been reasonably clear that the laws of the separate states must be held subordinate to the Constitution. The case with regard to Congress has been more questionable, because the legislature should be presumed to act in ways that consciously conform to the Constitution, and there is nothing in the text that confers superior powers

on the judiciary. On this distinction Mr Justice Holmes is often quoted: 'I do not think the United States would come to an end if we (the Supreme Court) lost our power to declare an Act of Congress void. I do think the Union would be imperilled if we could not make that declaration as to the laws of the several states.'

There remain, however, convincing reasons for entrusting a power of review to the courts, as explained by Hamilton with a view to allaying fears of legislative supremacy in *The Federalist* No. 78. This practice, however, makes the Supreme Court the judge of its own powers, and these powers have often been used to express controversial opinions about the true meaning of the text. There is a strong tradition by which the Court has considered itself obliged or entitled to 'find' in the Constitution the values which its majority of the moment considers to be either compatible with American tradition, commanded by prevailing consensus, suggested by an anticipated consensus, or required by natural law. As Archibald Cox has observed, natural law has been used as a means of validating the concept of 'substantive due process'—a procedure which he considers to be 'unwise as well as hopeless to resist...'

John Hart Ely of the Harvard Law School begins by making a distinction between 'interpretivism' and 'noninterpretivism'. Expressions attributed to today's 'liberals' could clearly be improved; intellectual clarity itself can be a victim of hideous language. But we may follow him in the distinction: 'interpretivism' means that judges should stick to the plain language of the Constitution for the norms they enforce; 'noninterpretivism' insists that they should when necessary reach beyond the language of the document to discover moral norms appropriate to the social needs of the time—a problem presented by the changes in both moral norms and social conditions. Professor Ely rejects the term 'strict construction' because it has recently been abused to mean mere political conservatism. He then shows that strict or 'clause-bound' interpretivism soon becomes impossible. Even such a phrase as 'natural-born citizen of

the United States' could mean several things; some degree of thought about the meaning of the words is bound to arise. But where that thought comes from and what it takes for authority makes a world of difference. The core of Ely's argument is that, where interpretation is required, it should be consistent with the aims of the Constitution as implied by its structure and on which it therefore depends for effective operation. To do this it is not necessary to draw on values which are inherently subjective, diverse or fluctuating.

This leads to his next step, an attack on the doctrine of 'noninterpretivism', which he quickly exposes as a vehicle for selective values. Argument about today's 'collapse of the Constitution' is overtly backward-looking character highlights its undemocratic nature: it is hard to square with the theory of our government the proposition that yesterday's majority, assuming it was a majority, should be able to impose its values on today's. The Constitution, it is true, was devised in part to check temporary majorities, but that is no answer because the possibility of change was allowed for when the Constitution was framed. The problem today, which we are seeking a source were phrased in open-ended terms. Perhaps more important, tradition is infinitely adaptable by various and conflicting causes. Segregation was until recently an authentic American tradition, as Southern whites proclaimed in its defence. The fact is that tradition can mean anything the judges say it means.

Consensus is the next to go. Here Ely makes a devastating point on the death penalty, which Justices Marshall and Brennan declared to be no longer constitutional because it was filled with modern community values. The result was an immediate rush by state legislatures to reinstate the death penalty under conditions which were intended to obviate alleged inequalities of practice. The justices had in fact unwittingly disclosed the existence of a majority opinion which was the opposite of their own. This brings Ely to a critique of Alexander Bickel, perhaps the most influential and surely the most admired constitutional thinker of our time. Bickel, he argues, made the primary mistake of starting out by looking for values which it was to be the particular role of the

judges to import. But there is no good reason for believing that judges are especially suited to the role of moralists, still less that they are better placed than legislators. He finds Ronald Dworkin guilty of a similar error when he pleads for 'a fusion of constitutional law and moral theory'. Ely is highly sceptical of the judges' superior capacity for correct moral reasoning. 'The Constitution may follow the flag', he admits, in a remark that seems likely to be widely quoted, 'but it is really supposed to keep up with the New York Review of Books?'

Bickel's basic dilemma was to reconcile his liberal social philosophy with his conservative constitutional principles. This for Ely is a false problem because there is nothing inherently illiberal about a constitutional principle that makes the processes of government under the Constitution the basic test of the rights to be exercised under it. And he points out that the last great wave of politically conservative views to have influenced the Supreme Court was the importation of highly doctrinaire nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* economics rather than genuinely strict construction. The main business of judicial review will thus be concerned with unstopping blockages in procedures already prescribed or implied by the Constitution, not with the search for values.

The last lap of Bickel's odyssey was his posthumously published attempt to achieve a reconciliation of conflict through a return to a kind of Burkean liberal traditionalism. Ely holds that this was a false path to take. The values that Bickel cherished were already there, if only he had been willing to trust the Constitution itself—and, of course, the American people. There are, in other words, certain principles inherent in the document in the concrete sense that when they are distorted or obstructed the system cannot work logically according to its own terms of reference.

The supreme example of this is the system of representation. Ely makes reasonable allowance for a certain amount of ordinary untidiness and even for some play in the system for special interests. But the principle he insists on is that a ruler representative is connected to all the interests in his constituency. He develops this into a well formulated argument for what may be

called modern, or positive virtual representation. Ely ingeniously delves back to the case of *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), when Chief Justice Marshall saved the Bank of the United States from prohibitive taxation by a state legislature, to show that the majority could not constitutionally use taxation as a weapon against a specific minority interest by passing legislation that did not bear equally on the majority. This was a case in which the Court played precisely the constitutional role that Ely assigns to it. And there is a continuity of principle, if not a direct line of connection, to the protection of 'discrete and insular minorities' as marked out by Mr Justice Stone in his famous footnote 4 to *Carolene Products* in 1938.

Ely's theory requires that American republican government should be based on majoritarian democracy. The difficulty here is that republican theory has accommodated two purposes as proper objects of representation, especially in its formative years. It is, however, helpfully true to say that the majority principle became overwhelmingly the dominant principle in the setting up of state and federal governments—a result more of political power than of triumphant theory. But the republican principles which are basic to the Constitution are not, historically speaking, coterminous with those of democracy. History has helped to resolve the difficulty by bringing about a convergence between republican theory and democratic practice. But a critical history of the Constitution could hardly be written from the normative standpoint of modern democratic theory.

Ely, however, faces this problem from two points of strength. First the Constitution needs to be construed in ways that are internally consistent; and following this, the great strength of the one-person, one-vote system is precisely that, as against all forms of weighted votes, it is the simplest system to administer as well as the easiest to understand. This destroys the objection that 'no admissible standard can be devised for determining the legality of cases of legislative apportionment.'

Ely remarks in a footnote that he passed through a period of worrying about whether rights would be as well protected by his method as

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under a "value-oriented" system. This analogy reflects the profound distrust of democracy which developed in American liberal circles as a result of authoritarian regimes abroad and McCarthyism at home. Ely does not for a moment suggest that the Constitution is a machine, and no rights. The much-neglected Ninth Amendment ("The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people") recognizes the existence of individual rights which enjoy constitutional protection and thus become constitutional rights. The mechanics of the Constitution should then be construed as intended to sustain certain values. The Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment offers an important source from later history. "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States." In a deft treatment of the clause, which is often badly interpreted, to distinguish between citizens and others, Ely suggests that it defines a class of rights rather than discriminating among persons. It was this clause, which Mr. Justice Black held to incorporate the Bill of Rights, which therefore applied to the states as well as to Congress. The First Amendment is no less fundamental: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..." No law? Hugo Black liked to emphasize the words. But distinctions have been made, and in the famous case of *Schenck v. United States* (1919) Mr. Justice Holmes enunciated the doctrine of "clear and present danger." A phrase which, as Paul Freund has pointed out, is not to be spoken as one word. According to "one approach, most types of speech, most messages," are protected by the Amendment, but exceptions which threaten the system itself are presumably not. An alternative approach—that of the Court in *Schenck*—is actually to define rights by virtue of circumstances: "But the character of every act depends on the circumstances in which it is done." This is true. But the most severe tests of the doctrine show how dangerously it restricts the freedom of the individual, especially in periods of excitement and when the "specific threat" has been wrongly identified.

In any case the degree of "protection" appears on the character of the "specific threat," so the distinction between the two approaches may have been overdone. Ely himself proposes to fuse them and concludes that "strict review" is always appropriate where free expression is in issue. We may well agree with this. Without knowing much more about how it will help to resolve hard cases—which, as Dworkin has shown, are not to be treated as though they were governed by different rules from ordinary cases.

These and other issues suffice to show that the rights which the courts should be concerned with are those found in the Constitution. The Supreme Court was overstepping these limits in 1973 when *Roe v. Wade* it not only invalidated the abortion laws of several states but went on to enunciate its own law, based on the development of the foetus. Legislative policies are the province of voters and legislators. But where does this leave the rights of the past, which, as Ely says, "it makes no sense to employ the value judgments of the majority as the vehicle for protecting minorities from the value judgments of the majority."

The answer has already begun to appear. The essential point is to protect minorities in the process

of representation itself. And it is completely for the courts to ensure that this equal status is fully protected, along with the equally important right to participate freely and to receive and disseminate information. Equal protection and the privileges and immunities of citizens are properly administered will ensure these rights. There is no need and no justification for looking beyond the Constitution to natural rights or the current consensus—which in fact may be a source of oppression.

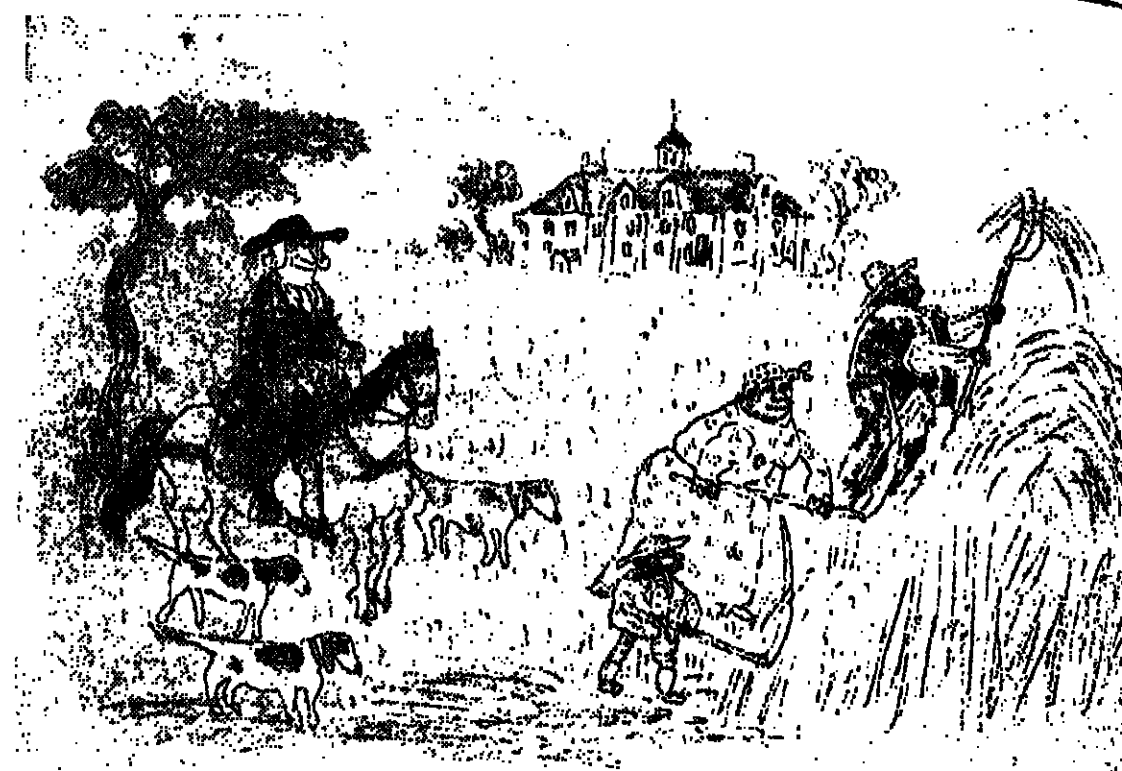
Ely is willing to test against hard cases such as that of *Alan Burke v. the University of California*, though he does not here develop his argument. Briefly, there is nothing to prevent majorities from imposing certain forms of discrimination against their own members in the interest of larger aims of policy. The view is open to the objection that it assumes that for legal purposes individuals are defined by group membership. But are not members of majorities themselves individuals? The answer appears to be that the present legacy of past discrimination makes this type of evidence relevant to an individual's constitutional identity. College admissions tutors have known this for longer than constitutional lawyers. But it is not a comfortable position to defend.

Wherever legislation produces discriminatory results, the legislators' motives are suspect and seldom difficult to divine. Ely constructs a theory by which the actual effects of apparently discriminatory legislation can be justified only if they fit tightly into the constitutionally acceptable frame. The objects of the legislation in question must moreover have some reasonable and socially acceptable substance. Otherwise, under the scrutiny of the Court using the ingenious doctrine of "suspect classifications" they will fail to pass the test of legitimacy.

All this supports highly significant arguments about the movement of the Warren Court. So far from importing fashionable liberal doctrines into its reasoning, as having gone farther than any of its predecessors to secure the very rights which are the subject of the Constitution and indispensable to legitimate and self-consistent administration. If Ely could bring himself to return to the constitutional language he has escaped, he would have the Chief Justice Earl Warren as a great strict constructionist.

The Harvard University Press deserves to be rebuked over the production of this book, which is badly made and has a lazy index. Professor Ely writes with an idiosyncratic "don't get me wrong" style which is often both apt and entertaining, though it may stand the test of time rather less well than (say) the prose of Alexander Bickel. What makes the book hard reading is the practice of packing together abstract nouns of close conjunction with compound adjectives, e.g., "a judicial imposition of the representation-reinforcing orientation." It would have been more economical to write out some of these statements at slightly greater length.

The achievement of this closely reasoned book is to restore to constitutional argument the validity of the original document as the principal source for the interpretation, not only of processes but of meanings or values. To do this, however, requires us to make choices among the values of the past, which Professor Ely has done. The subtleties of legal discourse should not be lost: from the truth that his argument does in fact reflect an ideology, sustained if not by a natural law then perhaps by a touch of faith.



William Steig has for fifty years enriched The New Yorker with drawings and cartoons, varied in style and subject, but always comic in their perception, fluent and delicate in their execution. His depiction of children in "Small Fry", first published in 1934, became a notable regular feature of the magazine. In a book of drawings, *The Lonely Ones* (1982), Steig moved away from his "realistic" cartoon style and attempted, with a more abstract, economic line, to explore the psyche and the unconscious: a naked woman, with loose hair and breasts, hangs from a lampshade above the caption: "Public Opinion No Longer Worries Me." A la Recherche du Temps Perdu (1959) consisted of work drawn in the style of a child and this drawing of "Washington in retirement at Mount Vernon", one of a series titled "American Beginnings", retains the freshness of a child's vision. Steig, in cartoons such as that in which mother screams at her child: "If you for me, you wouldn't exist", or one in which an enraged opera wife summons her severely sleep-walking husband back to the marital bed, shows a keen awareness of the agony and hatred of much human existence, as his treatment of American history echoes suffering. The drawings of Steig, in the faces of soldiers in battle and in *Kafka's* *Metamorphosis*, as he says, "he has only one life to live for his country." The drawings of William Steig (Faber with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, £12.50, 0 374 29011 8), from which the illustration on this page is taken, is a selection of his finest work from the past decade.

Devastating the Plains

By Hugh Brogan

DONALD WORSTER:
Dunp. Oxford University Press.
0 19 502550 4

Bad news, brethren. American agriculture—the bountiful, the miraculous—is about to come unstuck.

Donald Worster's book has many virtues. It is, for one thing, a lucid, succinct, intelligent and informative history of the Great Plains, from their formation in the Tertiary epoch, after the upheaving of the Rocky Mountains, to their present status as the world's largest factory-farm. It focuses on the greatest event and biggest disaster in the history of the Plains since the last Ice Age: the drought of the 1930s, which, along with the black blizzards, and to the Dust Bowl of the title; nothing could surpass the scientific yet humane delicacy and precision with which Professor Worster analyses that catastrophe.

Furthermore, the book is illustrated with a rich selection of 1930s photographs by the Dorothea Lange and others, that tell the tale of woe as vividly as ever, and with strikingly useful and numerous maps.

Within the whole area of the plains, Worster concentrates on the southern region, scene of the worst duststorms in the "dirty thirties", and within that region on two counties (Cimarron, Oklahoma, and Haskell, Kansas) to such effect that by the end of his book any reader will feel that he has followed the "plough" of the United States that is not much visited by foreigners or even by metropolitan Americans. It is perhaps the most convincing demonstration of Worster's skill that, without losing his sense of proportion, he makes one of his main themes is the cultural meanness of this land, which has only been settled in the past hundred years—he manages to make the southern plains as fascinating a subject as others have the South, New England, and California.

All this would be enough for most historians and geographers, a few, indeed, could achieve as much. Professor Worster, however, would not be content to have his book judged in such terms alone. That would miss his point. This

study of the Dust Bowl is above all an attempt to derive, from important lessons from the past, and an investigation of why his countrymen, the Plains farmers, are so reluctant to learn them.

His message is simple: the Dust Bowl was the work of men, not of Nature. The brown Plains soil is rich, but it lies under the rain shadow of the Rockies, and is scourged by savage winds. Nevertheless, until the nineteenth century it was held in place by its grass cover. Then came the white men, the settlers, with their deep ploughing and their endless rows of wheat, ignorant both of the importance of the grass and of the climatic cycle, they defied Nature. Then came the decade of drought; the wind did the rest. The rains returned in the 1940s, then receded again, and the "filthy fifties" produced dust-storms as devastating as those of the 30s, although the drought did not last so long. But it and the dust were back in the 1970s. Professor Worster warns that the 80s may bring the worst Dust Bowl yet, unless serious agronomic reform is undertaken; but his central concern is not so much to make bloodcurdling prophecies as to ask why no more than a few take them seriously.

He proposes an answer in terms of what he calls capitalism, and as student of American history must agree with much of his diagnosis. The whole point of the New World was that it unleashed man's greed by offering wealth. In farming terms this meant that an one frontier succeeded another—tobacco, cotton, wheat—the proportion of exhausted soil to virgin lands grew steadily higher. The people who settled Kansas and Oklahoma not only cherished the land as a sacred trust, but followed the "plough" of the United States that is not much visited by foreigners or even by metropolitan Americans. It is perhaps the most convincing demonstration of Worster's skill that, without losing his sense of proportion, he makes one of his main themes is the cultural meanness of this land, which has only been settled in the past hundred years—he manages to make the southern plains as fascinating a subject as others have the South, New England, and California.

All this would be enough for most historians and geographers, a few, indeed, could achieve as much. Professor Worster, however, would not be content to have his book judged in such terms alone. That would miss his point. This

They did not accept that land is a finite resource, needing loving husbandry; in a word, they were

not conservationists; they talked of the good Lord, but their faith was in the world market. They did not allow the duststorms to take. Consequently Plains agriculture is now organized entirely on short-term lines (except for the few, enriched with shade trees, up to the unworriedly Monmouths of the west, and ruthless as ever in their machine. Worster devotes some of his pages to proving it—and it cannot go on. Perhaps his single most telling detail is the point that the Plains farmers are now dependent on machines, which it takes fossil-fuel energy to run—more the farmer produces in food-crops. Thus American ingenuity in world oil and gas makes itself felt in the fields (much of the nation's oil produced in Oklahoma) and in the unhygienic ammonia fertilizers.

The implications of this are not lost on Worster. He tells us that about what should not be done, is little impressive about alternatives. Perhaps this is because he has not, I think, properly identified the enemy. It is not just capitalism, but capitalism as it is practiced, which is the enemy. It is not just capitalism, but capitalism as it is practiced, which is the enemy. It is not just capitalism, but capitalism as it is practiced, which is the enemy.

It is the ambition, appearing and disappearing, of the species which spontaneously arises and disappears in the world. It is the ambition, appearing and disappearing, of the species which spontaneously arises and disappears in the world. It is the ambition, appearing and disappearing, of the species which spontaneously arises and disappears in the world.

GEORFFREY GRIGSON (Editor):
The Oxford Book of Satirical Verse
454pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.50.
0 19 214110 4

Satirists are critics of power who reveal in their mastery of words: theirs is a literature of knowledge, but a shaming, aggressive and transforming knowledge. It is a symbolic fact that satire has no muse of its own, and must be content with the divided attentions of Thalia, Erato or any other unoccupied deity. For the form is unable to live off its private resources. It is radically impure, non-reflexive, dependent on agencies outside itself. There is the poet, there is his material. The music sways in stereo sound: a cursory glance

Can separate the dancer from the dance.

A mode of writing where the text is hard to reconcile with our fashionable concerns, whether as practitioners or as critics of literature. All the more room, then, for a wide-ranging historical anthology, which will imaginatively extend the emotional scope of verse satire in earlier times, before a narrow poetics erected penitentiary walls around our faculties of enjoyment. This is what Geoffrey Grigson has provided in his splendid anthology, which it would be a strange reader who could not derive abundant pleasure from the volume.

Grigson starts off with a healthy recognition, stated in the opening words of his short preface:

Whatever satirical poets may have said about their moral or reforming or punitive intentions, and they have made some rather grand claims—we may be sure that writing their satires never caused them pain. They have enjoyed it; and we enjoy what they have written, without apology.

That is right; and even the apparent oxymoron "rather grand" serves not as a weak intensifier, but as a hint of the level of self-doubt in these protestations. The compiler is willing to include "satire of amusement" along with the fiercer invectives. Indeed, he omits Marston altogether on the grounds that the poet "uses words like a rumbling bull, without the least sparkle". He finds space for Prior, Landor, Tom Moore and James Russell Lowell, not to mention twentieth-century ironists such as John Crowe Ransom and Edwin Arlington Robinson. Nevertheless, there is a proper measure of invective and abuse, and one is left in no doubt that the most damaging satire is that which is not the craftsman's care and an artist's disregard for timid sensibilities. As Grigson himself says, "The joke must not be lost—the joke of statement, of sound, rhythm, form, vocabulary, rhyme, and so on." Satire in verse, given its identity by an effect—the joke, to put it shortly—and not by a cause, whether idealism, reformatory zeal or personal alienation. A good anthology will be in part a history of feeling; but it will also be a treasury of poetic invention.

Grigson has produced one of the best among recent Oxford books. This may owe something to the absence of a direct forerunner: there is less sense of producing this year's model of an established line, in order to keep pace with those whose brand-loyalty shows signs of fading. We have neither elegant variation nor spectacular omission. Grigson sensibly acts on the assumption that his volume will need to function almost as a work of reference. It will be a useful guide to crossword-compilers, after-dinner speakers and the participants in "Quota Unquote". Students will revise by it, and parodists will revise it. Consequently, it was eminently proper to include "Bagpuss" and "Loudy" and the character of Zimri and the opening stanzas of *The Vision of Judgment*, and much else that is familiar. There is an unaffected centrality about his choice, which is something quite different from mere predictability. Grigson has printed many considerable poems in full: *Holy Willie's Prayer*, for instance, which shows

Reviling in rhyme

By Pat Rogers

how mordant it is possible to be in what looks like a lyric stanza. Here again, *Beppo*; Donne's fourth satire; Rochester's *Satire against Mankind*. Moreover, there are protracted episodes from great poems: *Hudibras*, *The Dunciad*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *Don Juan*, dare one add *Amours de Voyage*?

It is in this respect that the book affords its most pronounced contrast with Edward Lucie-Smith's *Penguin Book of Satirical Verse* (1967). Inevitably, a measure of overlap can be detected: out of Grigson's 232 poems (or extracts), Lucie-Smith used twenty-six. What makes for the disparity is a much greater desire on Lucie-Smith's part to strike out into unfrequented country. This enabled him to rescue such flies on the window-pane of history as Andrew Boorde, Robert Gould, James Dance, Robert Barnabas Brough, William Loeche, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Henry Alcock. It is true that there was, peculiarly, a studied obviousness in Lucie-Smith's twentieth-century inclusions; but in earlier periods, especially the Victorian, he went regularly for the unorthodox selection. This meant that there was less room for the major artists, and so the picturesque, the epigrammatic and the whimsical tended to prevail.

In addition, the compiler judged that his terms of reference meant virtually excluding *Don Juan*.

When it comes to the point, Byron opts for appetite for life rather than judgements upon it; and thus, though the poem contains satirical elements, its prevailing tone is not at all that of satire. Rather, it is something in a new mode—romanticism tinged with self-irony.

What would have been a stimulating critical kite to fly in a seminar can have no place in the anthology's baggage, if it means snuffing out the greatest verse-satire in English on what look like technical grounds. Grigson has no such tendentious line to uphold. He explicitly disavows the "famously difficult" task of defining satire. Of course, up to a point, his selection does the defining. It is enough to say that the choice vindicates his principled lack of dogmatism.

It could be said in Lucie-Smith's favour that a Penguin book may be a place to take risks which the Oxford compiler must disdain; and (correctly) that an anthology is to be judged on what it includes, not on what it excludes. Nevertheless, Grigson's more generous provision of Dryden, Rochester, Swift (even without *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift*), Pope, Churchill, Burns (absent from Penguin), Byron, Belloc, Roy Campbell, Auden and so on, does not detract from the impression of centrality already mentioned. Even so, we cannot have everything: perhaps the best poem Churchill wrote, *The Candidates*, with its savage note of despair, is present only in Lucie-Smith. But in general, Grigson seems to have the highest reaches of the art. He has fewer pindarics on the grunting of a hog, and a greater tolerance for the often reprinted—Belloc's "General Election" epigram, for instance, it is, after all, no use if a poem is regularly reprinted if it is not accessible in the place where we are most likely to search for it.

Another and more difficult comparison might be made with *The New Oxford Book of Light Verse*, edited by Kingsley Amis in 1978. Here the overlap is smaller, running from *Beppo* to "Loudy". But it is the wider intellectual interest of the point, it may be of moment to potential purchasers: quite possibly, the book club which supplied my own copy of Amis may want to take on Grigson in due course. Amis did offer a substantial introduction, setting out the principles governing his selection. Tactically this was almost unavoidable, since the anthology was to be so different from Auden's in tone and drift. It also enabled the compiler to justify his choice of Dryden and Pope, satisfactorily to my taste—and indeed to offer a reading of nineteenth and twentieth-century poetry which made sense of the limits he had imposed. Grigson, having eschewed defining and so on, has managed to make his case on the poems. It can afford to do so. Amis was strong on pure humour, on the impromptu and the

absurd. You expected, wrongly, Harry Graham to be there. But there are plenty of Hood and Frost, Carroll and Gilbert, J. K. Stephen and G. K. Chesterton, the frolicsome Eliot and the just-less-than-sombre Larkin. If there was a slight hint of elusiveness among the moderns included, one could also point to some possible dirty literary tricks (though the barmal of Crail misspell as "Crail" shows how this branch of literature awaits its Bentley), together with a sympathetically chosen smattering of Graves, Betjeman and Auden.

The comic and curious are not wholly absent from Grigson's volume, but they take on a different hue because of the surrounding poems. There is at one point the conjunction Beerbohm-Chesterton-Wyndham Lewis-Lawrence-Pound-Sassoon: one would have to learn a good deal of literary history and forget one's accustomed landmarks, in order to avoid reading these poems comparatively, that is to say (in terms of satire) largely unhistorically. A similar difficulty arises with the extracts from authors widely known for other contributions to literature: one just about recognizes Peacock as a verse satirist, because of the parodies in his fiction, but it is hard to read Macaulay's *Lucknow*, or Dickens's *Samuel Butler*, without bringing irrelevant expectations to the act. Thackeray's "Damages, Two Hundred Pounds" is an effective ballad-like protest, but its technique seems raw beside the virtuosity in tone and language which permeates *Vanity Fair*.

The compass of the volume extends from the author (anonymous) of *London Lickpenny* to the author (anybody but) of *Feragrine Prykke*. At the earlier end, there is a sprinkling of Skelton, about whom Geoffrey Grigson seems to have an enthusiasm. His "lovely wears boots which are... rather thick". It is a question how far this apparent clumsiness is a matter, not of Skelton's own technique but of the state of the language. Modernized spelling tempts us to read sixteenth-century English as though it were a primitive version of modern usage, rather than a fully evolved way of handling words:

O Scots perjured,
Unhappy ured,
I am assured
Your falsehoods discurd
It is and shall be, from the Scottish sea

Unto Gabione,
For ya be false each one,
False and false again,
Never true nor plain.
But fiery, flatter and feign,
And ever to remain
In wretched beggary
And manny misery.
In lousy lousie beggary,
And scabbie scorfiness,
And in abomination
Of all manner of nation,
Proud and poor of state.

("Moost" should presumably have been adjusted to "most.") Now this is plain, direct, cumulative writing, and it would be perverse to look for great verbal finesse. But we cannot hear the contemporary cadences, we do not know which alliterations are routine and which surprising, we do not read the sounds so as to judge whether abomination/nation might be a strong rhyme, in this same poem the editor glosses "pallard" as "straw-sleeper, tramp"; there is surely also the sense of "lecher" (French *putain*, Dutch *hoer*) represented by a single poem, this is *The Amende to the Telgouris and Soutaris*. No single extract could illustrate Dunbar's varied prowess, but there is at least a teaspoonful of his shattering skill with incremental forms.

At the other end comes the second half of Clive James's letter in *ottava rima*, "To Pete Atkins from Paris". Almost all the items in *Pan-Mall* (1977) seem to me worthy of their lineage: I would argue that the very best is the poem in Spenserian stanza on the Indianapolis 500 race, but the Paris poem displays comparable qualities of observation, deft allusion and verbal fix. In any case, contrary to what you might suppose, *ottava rima* is among the most difficult of the set forms, as anyone who has attempted it in a sustained poem will know. James manages

to infuse the stanza with a kind of Italianate raciness, the freedom without vulgarity that Byron discerned in Pulci.

When I say free—I mean that freedom—which Aristotle, Bolardo and Voltaire—Pulci—Berni—all the best Italian & French—as well as Pope & Prior among the English permitted themselves—but no improper words or phrasal enemy. Three translated examples can be studied in the pages of the new Oxford Book.

First, Dryden wafting Shadwell into the immortality of symbolic dullness:
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.

But rest to some faint meaning
Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Some beams of wit on other souls
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;

But Shadwell's genuine night admits
no ray.

His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
The word "confirmed" links up with "mature" in his tender years "in a previous line, and with the reference to "sons". The poem is about a passage from one generation to the next, the succession of dullness in dynastic order—Mac (son of) Flecknoe. With "confirmed" we are led to think of an adolescent rite, some coronation like a bar-mitsvah enacting progress to manhood or into the elect. Incidentally, Grigson prints out names with blanks in full, on the grounds that when "some satirist had yet another go at Cucklergh... he did say to himself Castlereagh, as he composed 'no C dash dash dash B'." This is a fair rule in general, but it does not altogether fit Mac Flecknoe: when we come to the

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From the Grand Manner to the cosy

By Graham Reynolds

SARAH UIVINS:
A Memoir of Thomas Uivins, RA
354pp. £12.
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W. WILKIE COLLINS:
Memoirs of the Life of William Collins
367pp. £12.
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TOM TAYLOR (Editor):
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THOMAS LANDSEER (Editor):
Life and Letters of William Bewick (Artist)
262pp. £10.
0 7158 1350 1

ALEXANDER GILCHRIST:
Life of William Etty, RA
355pp. £12.
0 7158 1358 7
Wakefield: EP Publishing.

The art of the early nineteenth century is habitually labelled Romantic. Yet it might be difficult to say at first sight in what way the five painters whose lives are reissued in this series display the unbridled emotion, the creative spontaneity and the disregard of rules which are generally held to typify Romanticism. These men emerged from a variety of backgrounds to witness the last defence of the Grand Manner, and lived to embody Victorianism in their cosy sentiment and unexacting domestic genre.

One quality which does link these variously endowed artists is their early love of drawing, leading to a grim determination to follow a hazardous and demanding profession. A refugee Italian drawing master, teaching in Pentonville spotted the talent of the nine-year-old Uivins. Etty, the son of a York gingerbread maker, spent a night sleepless with excitement when his mother promised that he could graduate to watercolours from the chalk and charcoal of his first drawings. Leslie escaped from apprenticeship to a Philadelphia publisher through the success of a portrait he had drawn from memory of the visiting British actor, George Frederick Cooke. William Bewick was born into the Quaker community of Darlington, where even Shakespeare and Scott were

banned; his enthusiasm was kindled by an aunt's collection and he received his first training in oils from an itinerant painter, George Marks.

These aspiring artists converged upon the Royal Academy schools, whose free tuition promised professional competence and access to exhibition and patronage. These schools still taught a rigorous discipline of draughtsmanship, and fostered aspirations towards the practice of High Art, with historical painting as the summit of ambition. Leslie's first works were conceived in the Grand Manner and included two enormous canvases on the themes of "Saul and the Witch of Endor" and "The Murder of Rutland". William Bewick was a more successful and enterprising entry into grandiose ambition. He was befriended by Benjamin Robert Haydon, and became one of his favourite pupils. Haydon was unquestionably helpful, but the friendship ended in mutual recrimination when he induced Bewick to put his name to a bill and left him crippled by debt. Indeed, financial difficulties controlled by stern moral purpose are a recurrent theme in these memoirs; Uivins seriously inspired the development of his career by gallantly taking sole responsibility for a defaulter's debt, and Collins was reduced to penury when his father died insolvent.

In the end all these painters, with the exception of Leslie, succeeded in following the track of High Renaissance art to its origins in Rome. Uivins was helped on his way by a commission from Lawrence to make large-scale copies of the Prophets and Sibyls by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He found the practical difficulties, including the erection of a scaffolding, too difficult to overcome. But when there, he succeeded so well in establishing a connection with the comparative community of Rome and Naples, which included Sir Richard Acton and Dr Quin, a pioneer of homeopathy, that he was able to stay in Italy for seven years. Bewick reached Rome two years after Uivins, in 1826, and accepted the commission of Lawrence's commission. He had already made large-scale drawings of the Elgin Marbles, one of which was acquired by the elderly Goethe. His copies of Jeremiah and the Delphic Sibyl, pleased Lawrence, but did not satisfy his old master Haydon, who thought Michelangelo was the Attila of European art and that Italy had ruined Bewick's brain.

Etty was a more hesitant visitor to those perilous shores. On his first attempt, in 1816, he turned back from Florence, a victim of homesickness and love-sickness. Six

years later he contrived to stay eighteen months, mainly in Venice where he derived the greatest benefit from studying the "Grand Copying Trium". The technical freedom of his later style shows how beneficial he found this study.

Collins was not able to make the journey till he was forty-eight. By then he was so far set in his brandy-straggled sentiment that he found the most effective stimulus was the Italian scenery, of which he made a number of landscape paintings.

Thomas Uivins, who died in 1857 at the age of seventy-five, was the longest lived of these five artists and had the most varied career. When he left England he was known primarily as a watercolourist and illustrator; it was in Italy that he developed confidence as a painter in oils. He was not accepted into the Academy till his return, becoming ARA in 1833 at the age of fifty-one and a full RA five years later. He then went on to fill a number of those official posts which were then still given to well-travelled academic artists; Librarian of the Royal Academy, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures and, in 1847, Keeper of the National Gallery. All these jobs have for many years been firmly in the hands of laymen but before the emergence of the professional art-historian and art administrator it was considered that they should be filled by practising artists, and Uivins's long sojourn in Italy had given him the necessary experience to succeed Eastlake.

Some of Uivins's earliest exhibits were top-picking scenes, and he extended the compass of his rural genre when he visited the Médou vineyards in 1817. His interest in peasant life was strengthened in Italy; his "Italian Mother teaching her child the Tarantella" and "Neapolitan boy decorating the head of his innamorata at the festa of the Madonna del Arco" are among the most glowing exotics in the Shapereau gift to the Victoria and Albert Museum. That gift also contains twenty-four paintings by Leslie; since it was presented to the nation in 1857 and half those pictures were painted after 1837 it may seem natural to regard Leslie as a typically Victorian artist. Yet his continuing love of the stage, reflected in his paintings from Shakespeare and Molière, together with his choice of eighteenth-century literature for other subjects, as in "Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadsworth", proclaim him a true representative of Regency taste.

"The Storm" by Etty was chosen for the British section in the exhibition of Romantic Art organized by the Council of Europe in 1959. But probably his most romantic trait was his obsession with the female nude. He had intended to become a landscape painter but "finding God's most glorious work to be WOMAN" he resolved to paint her, without draper's or milliner's work, more fully than had yet been done. His biographer, wrote in 1882, "he was naturally at pains to defend him from any charge of prurience; he remarks

that any young man who bought an Etty sketch for improper purposes would have made a bad bargain. In one instance a lady does he reproach the painter for choosing an objectionable subject as his theme for the introduction of the nude form; and even then it is the subject and not the treatment that he finds disagreeable. Had Dr Brightman known of Etty's painting of "Cupid dares showing his Wife by stealth to Cygus" she could have expanded her disquisition on the ceiling fresco by Tiepolo in the Bragaglia palace.

The biographies of these five artists are essential source books for the history of early nineteenth-century British painting, and their reappearance under the editorship of Professor Ilmish Miles is most welcome. Of the group only Etty has received fully up-to-date treatment, in Dennis Farr's monograph. The extent to which these memoirs satisfy curiosity about the men and their milieu is, of course, limited by the circumstances of their production. For one thing, none are adequately illustrated; for another their authors were of varying standards of competence. The original texts have been made more accessible by the provision of indexes.

As would be expected, Wilkie Collins's biography of his father, his first published work, is a fully professional job. He lists paintings and purchases and narrates the life well, though his filial piety sometimes leads to a tone of fulsome adulation which looks forward to the effusions of Miss Clack. The life of Leslie comprises his autobiographical journals, substantially enlarged by Tom Taylor, a professional man of letters. He emerges as a thoroughly amiable person, though his extreme modesty prevents him giving a clear impression of the part he played in the artistic life of his times. He writes glowingly about the kindness he and many other artists received from Lord Egremont, one of the outstanding patrons of contemporary British art, and his correspondence with Washington Irving charts the progress of his painting.

Gilchrist's life of Etty is, in the light of his admirable and pioneering life of Blake, a disappointing production. He is incapable of writing a sentence without intrusive capital letters and quotation marks, a coyness which serves as a model for Thornbury's execrably written biography of Turner. The life of Uivins was compiled by his widow, whom he had married in 1851 when he was sixty-nine. She scarcely practices to his credit no feeling for a coyness which serves as a model for Thornbury's execrably written biography of Turner. The life of Uivins was compiled by his widow, whom he had married in 1851 when he was sixty-nine. She scarcely practices to his credit no feeling for a coyness which serves as a model for Thornbury's execrably written biography of Turner.

William Bewick—he was no relation of Thomas Bewick, though he was proud to bear the same name—met Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Keats and other writers at Haydon's, and his descriptions of his meetings with such sitters as Sheridan Knowles, Maturin and Lord Byron are decidedly more lively than the arid portrait drawings by which alone he is now remembered. His mention of the Italian adventure which according to Haydon was responsible for Bewick's mind being "quite gone", "The old Duke of Lanta had kept him, and he appeared as if Italian Women had drained and destroyed him".

The careers of these artists span over half a century, ample time for significant change to be discernible in their world. At first patronage was still mainly in the hands of the big estate owners, men like Lord Egremont, Sir John Leveson, Sir Thomas Heathcote and Lord Northwick. By the mid-century the demand for the work of living British artists came mainly from the new industrialists, cotton, sheepshanks, Vernon, Gillott, Gillott. Leslie emphasizes the important role played by the engraver in enhancing an artist's fame and income; and dealers took an increasing share in achieving these benefits. In their later life Etty and Collins were materially helped by the purchases John Colls made as a middleman.

A few figures recur as focal points of reference amidst the changes. David Wilkie was regarded with unstinted admiration by contemporary painters, and his name crops up again and again in these memoirs. When recuperating from a breakdown in Rome he gave Uivins valuable and encouraging advice. Collins, after a long close friendship, asked him to be an godfather to his eldest child, named Wilkie in consequence. But used to kittens than babies, Wilkie was astonished to find that his godchild was born with the ability to sue.

George IV's state visit to Scotland in 1822 led to an invasion by English artists in search of commissions north of the border. Uivins, Leslie and Bewick amongst them. Bewick's account of his reception by Scott leaves no doubt about his host's warm hospitality and his genuine desire to encourage artists. Leslie, who also made a portrait of Scott, says he had no feeling for pictures on the walls of his dining-room which no eye possessing sensibility to what is excellent in art could have endured. But he admits that he described scenery with a dominating influence on the art of his time. He added many places to the library of topographical draughtsmen. Subjects from his works were used for the sketching societies and were themes for many exhibited pictures. Thackeray said that he had read the numerous letters which Uivins wrote during his seven years' stay in Italy. He was a keen observer of Italian life and manners, even though he viewed them with a profound hatred of Roman Catholicism.

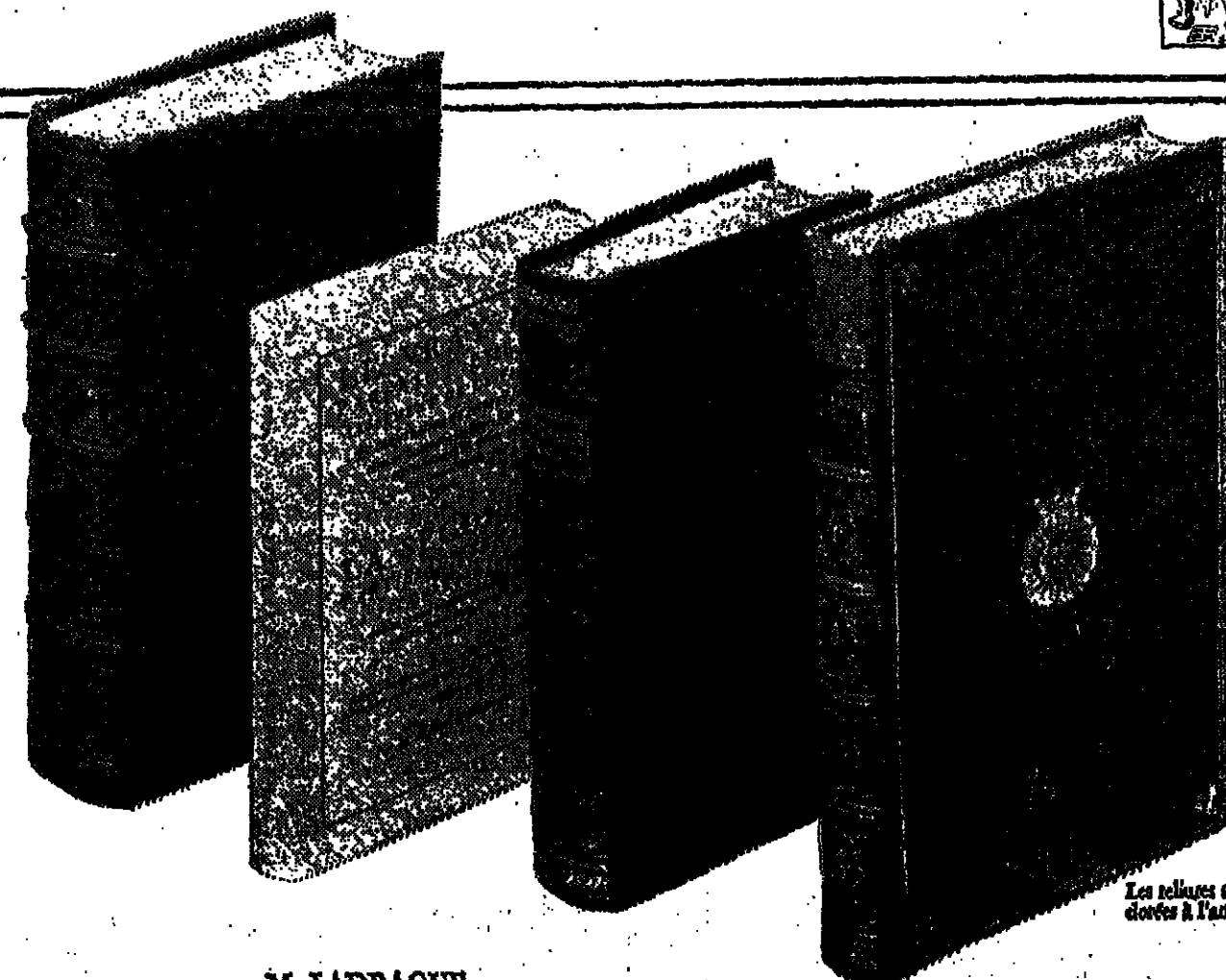


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1 volume broché format 14 x 22 de 328 pages. La description minutieuse de la plus importante bibliothèque d'occultisme. Ouvrage indispensable aux chercheurs, collectionneurs et libraires. Préface: Renaud de la Fayette

M. LADRAGUE
Sciences occultes (bibliothèque Alexis Ourioff) - Moscou, 1870
1 volume broché format 19,5 x 26,5 de 234 pages. Catalogue d'une très importante bibliothèque d'occultisme décrivant plus de 1 000 ouvrages et qui ne fut imprimée qu'à 70 exemplaires. Préface: Renaud de la Fayette

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F. HOFER
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C. GLASER
Traité de la chymie - Paris, 1667
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De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux Franc-Maçons et aux Illuminés sur la Révolution de France - Tubingen, 1801
1 volume broché format 12 x 20 de 260 pages. Un très important document sur l'histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie. Préface: A. Mellor

J.L. LAURENS
Vocabulaire des Franc-Maçons suivi des constitutions générales de l'Ordre de la Franc-Maçonnerie... - Paris, 1809
1 volume broché format 10 x 17 de 180 pages, texte de référence indispensable. Préface: P. Bunout

BARON DE TSCHOUDY
L'Étoile flamboyante
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1 volume broché ou relié format 15 x 22 de 188 pages. Publication pour la première fois au monde de l'intégralité d'un rituel d'initiation compagnonnique avec ses explications. Préface: L. Caray

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MICHAEL NOSTRADAMUS
Traité des confitures
1 volume broché ou relié format 8 x 13 de 192 pages

DEJEAN
Traité de la distillation ou la distillation réduite en principes - Paris, 1769
1 volume broché ou relié format 11 x 18 de 468 pages. Le meilleur recueil de recettes anciennes pour les liqueurs, les fruits à l'eau-de-vie, les alcools.

APPERT
L'Art de conserver - 1810
1 volume broché 12 x 20 de 152 pages. Un des grands classiques de la gastronomie; un livre de recettes traditionnelles par l'inventeur de la conserve.

Island-scapes in sepia

By Steven Runciman

EDWARD LEAR:
Views in the Seven Ionian Islands A facsimile of the Original Edition published in 1893 by the Artist.
48pp. 20 tinted lithographic plates. Oldham: Aveyard, Broadbent, £60 (edition limited to 1,000 numbered copies).
0 90484 04 3

It was in the Ionian Islands, while they were under British rule, that Edward Lear seems to have spent the happiest months in his troubled life. He loved their scenery. Of Corfu he wrote that "no other spot on earth can be fuller of beauty and of variety of beauty". He was welcomed there by successive High Commissioners. Officials in all the islands received him hospitably; and he made many friends among the local population. When he learnt in 1862 that the British Government proposed to cede the islands to the Kingdom of Greece in 1864, he decided to publish an album of twenty plates of views of them, as a record, partly for his own satisfaction and partly in the hope that the album would bring him some money. He spent two months in the spring of 1863 in the islands making suitable sketches. On his return he tried to reproduce the drawings by photography. When this attempt was impracticable, he fell back on lithography.

Views in the Seven Ionian Islands appeared in December, 1863. It comprised eight views of Corfu,

together with a vignette on the title-page, three views of Santa Maura (Lefkas), of Cephalonia and of Zante, and a view each of Paxos, Ithaca and Corfu. A few copies were fully coloured, but the majority were tinted sepia lithographs, priced at five guineas a volume. Each plate was followed by a short explanatory note. Lear wrote six hundred letters soliciting subscriptions; and the book gives the names of some three hundred and fifty subscribers, headed by the Royal Library, the Prince of Wales, the Comte de Paris and the Duc d'Aumale. Several subscribers ordered more than one copy; and Sir Henry Storks, the High Commissioner, to whom it was dedicated, eventually bought ten. In the end Lear had a net profit of £300, though he had difficulty in extracting money from fifty of the subscribers.

The book did not have the success that it deserved. The lithographs do not have the almost impressionistic freedom of the sketches that Lear used to make, more or less, for some future oil-painting than finished works; but they are remarkably attractive and evocative. Copies of the book have long been difficult to find, as many have been broken up and the prints framed separately. It is therefore a great pleasure to welcome a scrupulously faithful facsimile of the lithograph edition, made by a new Screenless Printing Process, at a price which is almost unbelievable. Lear himself would have been amazed and amused, and half-bitterly vindicated, to be valued so greatly nearly a century after his death.

The first Adam

By David Walker

WILLIAM ADAM:
Vitruvius Scoticus
Reduced facsimile of the 1812 edition, with an introduction and notes by James Simpson
416pp including 180 plates. Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1955.
0 904505 82 5

Although published in 1812, Vitruvius Scoticus was begun in 1726 and is really the work of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, about 150 copies being collated and marketed in that year by Adam Black from prints run off forty-six to sixty-six years earlier, some with variations in content not included in the present reprint, which is reproduced from one of the more typical copies. Like James Gibbs's Book of Architecture of 1728, it had been intended to make good the absence of Vitruvius's designs from Colin Campbell's Vitruvius Britannicus of 1715-25.

It would appear to have been near to publication at the time of

William Adam's death in 1748 and although a few are missing, the earliest plates clearly represent his earliest designs fairly completely. His sons did not issue it, however, perhaps because the old-fashioned baroque of many of the plates was thought a possible embarrassment to their careers; and when John, the eldest son, who remained in Scotland, revived the project in 1766 it was on the basis of a radically updated revision which added eighteen new plates, would have dropped at least some of the originals altogether and provided revised and re-engraved versions of others. This proved too ambitious to be completed and it may be doubted if, even in revised form, Robert and James, then at the height of their London careers, had any enthusiasm for its appearance.

Like the original, the reprint of Vitruvius Scoticus has appeared late, though on this occasion only because behind Benjamin Blom's republication of the other Vitruvius volumes, Publisher and printer faced formidable difficulties. Scoticus is the largest in format, printed in a brownish ink which is not dense enough to photograph easily, with a high proportion of

double-spread plates hinged in the middle, several of which are reduced to a more manageable size almost uniform with Blom's. Consideration of cost and resolution of these problems has led to the reprint being printed in a similar tone to the original but on a pleasantly different-looking cream-coloured paper and bound in green canvas with gold titles on black leather labels. Clarity has suffered to some degree at the folding plates where the one-third reduction has had to be exceeded. Nevertheless reproduction is on the whole as good as could have been expected of plates far short of simple black and white, and the only really unsatisfactory feature is the disappearance of the central bays of the buildings into the binding at the double-page plates.

De that as it may, we still have good cause to be grateful for long Vitruvius Scoticus has been accessible to been among the other Vitruvius major eighteenth-century British architects though he has no credit the two great pieces of extensive of British garden buildings, Chatsworth at Hamilton.

الكتاب 1550

The lost rectory garden

By Peter Scupham

GEORGEY GRIGSON:

History of Him

96 pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.50.
0 436 18841 4.

In Geoffrey Grigson's account of his early years, *The Crest on the Silver*, the image which controls his childhood—his great good place—is a Cornish Rectory and garden. The sufficiency of this world speaks to the child; its secrets and secrets, most particularly its laurels—"one of the first, natural excellences of which I was conscious"—wielded in this landscape of love are the deaths of two brothers in the First World War, and the deserts of school, "deserts altogether unwrapped by love, but not empty of pursuit and every stone and cactus of falsity and cruelty." The war ends, "leaving me still more a stranger in a contemptuous or indifferent humanity, thrown the more into the hell of St. John's, Warr, the gleam of laurel leaves, the feeling of sand, and the mystery of arches, and the consolation of moving water."

For Walter de la Mare, in his magnificent discursive book on childhood *Early On Morning*, the key is not the laurel but the convolvulus, whose "cool dark heart-shaped leaves and waxen vase-like simplicity" evoke in me a curious wonder and delight. Such landscapes are at the heart of life; they demand celebration. Such moments and memories, recaptured by the exercise of a passionate imagination are central to the poetry of T.S. Eliot or Wordsworth. "The hard thing—and this is where Grigson's strength lies—is to keep undimmed the freshness of this double vision of the natural world."

Grigson's new collection, *History of Him*, is primarily a book written in the present tense, celebrating a world of now rather than a world of then. The child's directness of perception has not been forgotten; it has become prescriptive in shaping the adult's response to the world. The child's "knowledge and scenting" and the oppressions of a "bearded man" is one of the few poems here which look back; it is in fact, foreshadowed by a few lines in *The Crest on the Silver*. For the most part, the poems are landscapes of small epiphanies, poems which implicitly judge the quality of our own response to experience.

These poems are a little reminiscent of S.E. Hinde's pillow book: *Soliloquy*. Outlandishly splendid things, trivial things that become important. On a special Occasion. History weighs lightly here, among *Belle-de-Nuit* flowers, the "plastic/Adder's conifer dress," "Grass purpled by Judas flowers" and varied excursions:

How these clouds in the young sky
These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

In Grigson's substantial *Now*, though, there is no sense of a cold world removed from human feeling. Emotions glance through the open textures of the poems; the best life here is one of gentleness: "Time oppresses, yet time also releases from oppression."

Outside this foreign window, their
A silver line and a Paulonia tree:

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

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And smell like sweet of a girl.

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And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

These ferns in this hedge are
And smell like sweet of a girl.

Extent and lessening light these
slight shapes sign

At times that time does not exist.

Much of the poems centre on the
French landscape which forms the
theme of Grigson's book *Notes From
An Old Country*, and there is a
particular sensitivity to subtleties
of light and atmosphere, as in

"Crossing the Beauce by Slow
Train, after the Harvest" and "The
Veil": "A veil in air of the fall,
of yellowing/Not yet independent,
not yet/Quite dead leaves."

This acute visual sense can work
in painterly effects, or in the cris-
per antitheses of "Washing her
Hair in this Garden": "Green her
shampoo container on that orange/
Tobac and rectangle-shadows are/
Slewed into blacked diamonds."
The unforced clarity of Grigson's
language, its ease of cadence, can
be heightened into poems with rhyth-
mic élan. "Fling Away" and
"Crossed Swords on a Midland
Map" recall the tone and style of
James Reeves or early Graves.

Behind this precise and unadorned
clarity lie ache and unease.
When C. S. Lewis, in his autobio-
graphy *Surprised by Joy*, attempted

to chart the course set by his
moments of illumination—the
sudden vision as he stood in a
flowering curragh of his brother's
toy biscuit-box garden, or the idea
of Autumn revealed by a Beatrix
Potter illustration—he found that
moments of "unsatisfied desire
which is itself more desirable than
any other satisfaction" led him
remotely to a Christian conversion.
This is not Grigson's way.
Discomfort provokes in the long,
muttering lines of "The Park" and
"Difficult Season", where "Light,
sneaking in, will not/ Decline in
green lyric of the dawn; only, after
the longest for rain. A smudge of
damp, and heat, and the sudden fil-
lage again." There are poems of con-
undrum: small metaphysical gang-
lia like "Not in a Twinkling" and
its more succinct re-working "No
Explanation".

Suppose we cease worrying the
intricate
Nonsense of our fate. Suppose we
That is to be sick and low, that
is to be

In the dull way demented.

Though the formal rituals of the
Church afford no secure hold—in

the formal rituals of the
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